THE FIRST CRAG INTERNATIONAL CONFLUENCE 2015

Thursday 3 December – Saturday 5 December 2015
University of Edinburgh

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ARGUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

CREATION OF REALITY: Towards an Interdisciplinary and Comprehensive understanding

Since the second half of the 20th century, ‘creation of reality’ is a compound that has gained exponential momentum in books and other publications (fiction and non-fiction). The general increase in the human belief that reality is, or can be to differing extents, created by us, is apparent in social processes of empowerment or disempowerment. ‘Creation of reality’ is also a growing scheme within the humanities, in the diverse corrugations of social constructivism. It is also vivid in the science-fictional idea of terraforming or planetary engineering, or in New Age beliefs of supra-agency. Contemporary philosophers of mind touch the ‘creation of reality’ theme through discussions on cognitive enhancement, virtual reality, or contemplative reprogramming, and they explore our cognitive capacities to shape our surroundings beyond our organismic apparatus. And last but not least, in the last five decades, growing environmental consciousness and interest for holistic life-on-earth studies seem to call for the development of an interdisciplinary comprehension (a meta-geobiology?) of Nature (more and more artefactual), and Technoculture (more and more perceived as natural).

This conference and workshop, organized by the Creation of Reality Group, sponsored by the University of Edinburgh researcher-led fund, by the French institute, and hosted by the School of Literature, Languages and Cultures, will be the first international Crag Confluence. We warmly invite propositions from all fields: discourse analysis, social epistemology, politics, foucauldian genealogy, environmental studies, philosophy, cognitive sciences, history, education, anthropology, physics, sociology, informatics, cultural studies and the humanities (the list is not exhaustive).

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How to get here (see also maps page 5):

http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/city/Getting-Here

Wifi access will be provided free of charge
PROGRAM

Venue: Project Room, LLC,
University of Edinburgh,
50 George Square
(first floor to the right)

Thursday 3 December

3:15 pm - 3:45 pm  Welcome and Registration – Project Room

4:00 pm - 5:30 pm  Panel 1
    4 to 4:30 | Anatole Lucet (ENS-Lyon): ‘Can freedom be triggered and creation induced? A discussion on the paradoxes of emancipatory education’
    4:30 to 5 | Iwona Janicka (University of Warwick): ‘Housing Projects As Affirmative Forms of Social Change’
    5 to 5:30 | Sam Coombes (University of Edinburgh): ‘Creolisation, Relation, and planetary humanism as creative futures: Edouard Glissant and Paul Gilroy’

5:30 pm - 6 pm  Tea break

6:00 pm  First keynote talk
    Christopher Beedham (University of St.-Andrews): ‘The Structural Creation of Reality in Grammar and Ideology’

7:30 pm  Optional dinner

Friday 4 December

9:00 am - 10:30 am  Panel 2
    9 to 9:30 | Salvatore Italia (University of Cagliari): ‘The Concept of Environment between Creating and Finding’
    9:30 to 10 | Oscar Aldred & Alex Hale (Historic Environment Scotland – HES): ‘Archaeological ontologies: what is the “real” Dunbarton Rock?’
    10 to 10:30 | Martina Karels (University of Edinburgh): ‘New York’s 9/11 Memorial and the shaping of memory’

10:30 am – 11:00 am  Coffee break

11:00 am to 12:30 am  Panel 3
    11 to 11:30 | Laura Gow (University of Antwerp): ‘Perception: Experienced Reality is Always Created’
    11:30 to 12 | Camille Buttingsrud (University of Copenhagen): ‘The vastness of the embodied self: a phenomenological investigation of dancers’ self-consciousness’
    12 to 12:30 | Alicia Fuentes-Calle (University of Barcelona): ‘Creation of reality approached from the perspective of the “art of language”/poetics in the framework of linguistic diversity’

12:30 am – 2:00 pm:  Optional Lunch (Suggestion Teviot building)
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm  Panel 4
2 to 2.30 | Luis de Miranda (University of Edinburgh): ‘What is coexcellence and how does it relate to creation of reality?’
2:30 to 3 | Nicholas G.S. Saul (Sciences Po Paris): ‘Politics and the grammar of reality: Collective Intention as a potential praxis of democracy’
3 to 3:30 | Perig Pitrou (Collège de France, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique): ‘Cosmopolitics and Creation of Reality’

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm  Tea break

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm  Panel 5
4 to 4:30 | David Dupuis (EHESS, Collège de France): ‘The supernatural factory: elaboration of supernatural beings in ayahuasca practices’
4:30 to 5 | Martin Fortier (ENS-Paris, EHESS, Institut Jean Nicod): ‘How real does the world feel to you?: Ontological commitments, from psychiatric conditions to psychotropic experiences’
5 to 5:30 | Zornitsa Dimitrova (WWU Münster): ‘The Scaffold of a World – Toward an Ontology of Literary Creation’

5:30 pm – 6:00 pm  Tea break

6:00 pm  Second keynote talk
Tim Ingold (University of Aberdeen): ‘One World Anthropology’

7:00 pm  Public round table on ‘Creation of Reality’ with Tim Ingold, Christopher Beedham, Alan Bundy and conference participants

8:00 pm  Conference dinner offered by the Crag
(Sylvester’s at 55 West Nicholson Street – Tel: 01316624493)

Saturday 5 December

9.30 am  Third keynote talk
Alan Bundy (University of Edinburgh): ‘Could a Computer Create Its Own Representations?’

10.30 am – 12 am  Collective workshop, general discussion and plans for the future

12 am  Close of the Conference by Luis de Miranda et al.
Walking directions to George Square

These directions can be used by travellers from both Waverley train station and the main bus station. From the bus station, follow directions 1-11, and from Waverley follow directions 3-11, taking a left down Waverley Bridge on exiting the station. Please note: This is not the quickest way to George Square but it is the simplest for those who do not know Edinburgh.

From Edinburgh Bus Station, St Andrew Square entrance (walking takes approx. 30 minutes):
1. From St Andrew Square, turn left and continue until you reach Princes Street.
2. Turn right onto Princes Street until you reach the traffic lights, then cross the road towards Princes Mall. Keep Princes Mall on your left, and walk down the hill (you are now on Waverley Bridge).

From Waverley Train Station, Waverley Bridge exit (walking takes approx. 20 minutes):
3. Once on Waverley Bridge, continue until you reach a set of pedestrian traffic lights.
4. Cross over the road and head left, following the road around to the right onto Market Street.
5. Walk up the steep hill (Market Street), crossing over to the left hand side of the street.
6. At the top of Market Street, follow the road round to the left onto North Bank Street.
7. Continue walking and the road will bear right and become Bank Street.
8. At the traffic lights at the top of Bank Street, cross over the Royal Mile junction onto George IV Bridge.
9. Continue to walk down George IV Bridge and at the first set of traffic lights (at the Bedlam Theatre after the Museum of Scotland) take the left hand fork as the road becomes Bristo Place.
10. Continue walking until you reach a set of traffic lights (at the junction with Teviot Place).
11. Cross the road to the central island and then cross over on to Bristo Square, and look out for signage.
ABSTRACTS

Anatole LUCET
(ENS-Lyon)

‘Can Freedom Be Triggered and Creation Induced?
A Discussion on the Paradoxes of Emancipatory Education’

Traditionally, the tasks of education are fulfilled by three fundamental institutions: family, school and society. Initially described by Plato and restated by Hegel, this distribution ensures a global and ongoing process directed towards the creation of certain types of human beings. As the basic elements of this teleological process, pupils may be understood as the undifferentiated matter from which educators intend to realise a given model. In this perspective, the school appears as a mould in which human beings, prepared by their families to accept the very principles of education, learn the rules of the society in which they are to live as adult citizens. This instrumental understanding of education complies with the description of both school and university as paramount structures of “reproduction”, as described in Bourdieu and Passeron’s 1970 Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture. For centuries, this essentially conservative feature was enforced through an authoritative educational system. As long as social order and reproduction constituted the core of education, this system could successfully shape generations of submissive adults. But what if education makes emancipation its criterion, and liberty its goal?

This issue, which Kant coined as “one of the greatest problems of education”, is highly challenging both on a theoretical and on a practical level. It reveals a tension between the constraint endogenous to the educational process and the prospects of producing, through education, free individuals. As long as the relationship between the educator and the learner is conceived as a unilateral transmission of knowledge from one owner to one passive recipient, any actual emancipation and the possibility for the emergence of something new through education seems most unlikely. Several positions suggest a way out of this tension inherent to the project of emancipatory education. One radical solution is to offer “the best education ever: no education at all” (Mühsam, 1905). This would allegedly guarantee that the original freedom of the child remains safe from the educating projections of his teachers, all of which are bound to lead her astray of her true self. Another way is to conceive a whole coherent educational system, specifically designed in order to guarantee liberty (for example Rousseau’s attempt to preserve man’s authentic self in a corrupt society as described in Émile, or On Education). This endeavour has been the main objective of several utopian projects realised ever since. However, dystopias highlighted how such projects of a “total” creation of liberty could easily turn into totalitarian systems in which all “creation” is actually channelled in a way which makes it unlikely that any new reality might occur.

My concern in this paper is to address the challenge of emancipatory education in order to see whether it can actually – and if so, how it manages to – create a radically new reality. For this to happen, it must somehow manage to trigger that which does not depend on its action: the emancipation of the subject of education. As a matter of fact, education can make good (or bad) citizens, it can make brilliant researchers and efficient labourers, happy parents or depressed children (or any other way round), but how can it ensure that the learner “becomes what she is” in the sense that Nietzsche had it, i.e. an ever creating self, not only the creature but essentially the creator of new realities? Can there be any recipes for the creation of the radically new, for the emergence of the unknown?

I will approach in my discussion the theoretical issues at stake in this fundamental moment of our societies, trying to see, from the very perspective of school and from its critics as an institution (such as that levelled by Ivan Illich in his 1971 Deschooling Society, or that described in Jacques Rancière’s The Ignorant Schoolmaster), how a society of emancipated individuals can emerge, that is a society moved by a principle of artistic creation rather than by one of technical reproduction. Rebellious normalities, emancipatory reaction and assimilated creation will be discussed as potential causes of failure of this ambitious longing for the new. I will discuss practical as well as philosophical examples taken from various experiences of mutual education and of so-called alternative education as well as from models of instruction which claim to make a coherent detour through authority to allow emancipation to take place. The core of my argument will be focused on the processes and moments of creation, i.e. those instants where new realities spring from the educational relationship.
Iwona JANICKA  
(University of Warwick)  
‘Housing Projects as Affirmative Forms of Social Change’

The concept of social change is often linked to political resistance. Political resistance in turn has been usually associated with negativity. This is because resistance is intimately connected to critique and critique, in Michel Foucault’s words, is about ‘how not to be governed like that, […] not for that, not by them’. Such a ‘critical attitude’ tacitly assumes that one becomes free or sovereign through the use of negations. Resistance can be understood then as a form of political actualization of this romantic idea of critique. In this paper I would like to propose an alternative formulation of resistance and social change that would be conceptualized beyond negativity. I will concentrate on contemporary anarchism in practice in order to demonstrate how anarchist collectives – and in particular housing projects – are a realization of an affirmative form of political practice.

As a point of departure I take Uri Gordon’s book Anarchy Alive! There, Gordon describes from the perspective of practice what makes up contemporary anarchism and how contemporary social movements work towards social transformation. He describes housing projects, co-operative farms and autonomous zones as forms of anarchist r/evolution – a non-irruptive, non-revolutionary form of social change that is practiced on a daily basis in anarchist collectives. Using a cluster of concepts, he accounts for various aspects of anarchist movements – creating a family resemblance of what anarchism is – yet he is not able to propose an umbrella term accounting for the diversity of anarchist goals. I would like to consider Gordon’s anarchist collectives from a mimetic perspective and view them as a very specific form of ‘training camps’. Through the concept of mimesis it is possible to account theoretically for some forms of anarchist practice today.

I claim in this paper that training – defined as a directed bodily repetition of available models – can be useful for thinking about anarchist collectives. These collectives try to introduce alternative, daily practices into their micro social structures as a way to permanently change the surrounding world. I show that this is where a mimetic concept of training can be used as a valuable conceptual tool towards understanding anarchist collectives. My claim throughout this paper is that contemporary anarchism in practice is an effective form of harnessing mimesis towards a more habitable world. This take on anarchist practice allows for a different interpretation of collective life projects in anarchist practice. I argue that it is affirmation of specific forms of daily practice rather than critique (or resistance in the negative sense) that is at the heart of contemporary anarchism in practice. This shift in perspective allows for reflecting on the possibility of developing Foucault’s ‘arts of existence’ in the affirmative mode.

Sam COOMBES  
(University of Edinburgh)  
‘Creolisation, Relation, and Planetary Humanism as Creative Futures: Edouard Glissant and Paul Gilroy’

Over the last two decades of so the writings and long career of leading francophone Caribbean theorist Edouard Glissant (1928-2013) have come to prominence in anglophone intellectual circles after many years in obscurity outside of the francophone context. Glissant’s theoretical writings offer an alternative vision for the future of our globalised world than the present-day paradigm which has thus far been directed by the politics of post-Cold War Anglo-American political neoliberalism. I will argue in this paper that Glissant’s theory of Relation, crucially incorporating as it does the concept of creolisation, presents a counter-narrative, or more precisely a ‘counter-poetics’ in response to globalisation. It offers a model for a globalised world in which each individual language and culture can be accorded its full and rightful place, free of domination at the hands of hegemonic cultural and economic forces. As such it represents an invitation to envisage the 21st century differently, to step outside of accepted paradigms and look for alternative strategies, be it with respect to the environment, policies on foreign language acquisition or cultural policy more broadly conceived. As such Glissant’s thought bears some resemblance to the arguments for a new type of cosmopolitanism proposed by Paul Gilroy. Gilroy argues for a new type of ‘planetary humanism’ involving restoring certain types of universalist ideals. The search for cooperation internationally depends on finding areas of common ground culturally. Both of these thinkers’ theories will be discussed and related to each other in this paper, as aids to re-thinking contemporary political and cultural strategies.
Christopher BEEDHAM  
(University of St-Andrews)  
‘The Structural Creation of Reality in Grammar and Ideology’

This paper puts forward the thesis that language creates the reality that we perceive, i.e. there is no such thing as objective reality. Saussure devised the term ‘sign’ for words, morphemes and grammatical constructions, and said that the sign consists of signifiant (form) and signifié (the thing signified) and that the sign is indivisible, i.e. signifiant and signifié are inseparable, a difference in form inevitably carries with it a difference in meaning. The linguistic creation of reality happens in both grammar and political ideologies. For grammar we will show that the passive construction in English – the form be + V-ed, as in My house was burgled last night – has two different meanings created for it by two different formal analyses, viz. the voice analysis and the aspect analysis. For political ideologies we will show how English Nukespeak, the language of pro-nuclear arms rhetoric, creates a reality in which nuclear weapons are made to appear harmless, protective and peaceful; and we will show how between 1949 and 1989 the German language of the GDR was a socialist German, whilst the language of West Germany was a capitalist German. To speak a language or language variety is to think in the categories and concepts which that language or language variety creates.

Oscar ALDRED & Alex HALE  
(Historic Environment Scotland – HES)  
‘Archaeological Ontologies: What is the “Real” Dumbarton Rock?’

Archaeologists rarely challenge their own discipline of archaeology. Such a re-evaluation can contradict the very nature of what is real and what is created through the process of excavation or survey. In this constructivist disciplining world the challenge is to find ways to overcome convenient versions of the past, ones that archaeology is prone to, like ‘solid’ rather than fluids realities; what we might call ‘material histories’. However, does such a position depend upon questioning the temporal systems that limit the meaning of what constitutes archaeology? And if so, does such a positioning demand flexibility of a hard fought understanding in which vertical hierarchies and temporal successions are tempered by flatter, horizontal, extended and inter-connected histories – or parallel visions of the past along the lines of treaded, multiple narratives?

One of the controversies is to establish what archaeology is, what it does and how it formulates the past from the evidence it digs up, records and observes, maps, photographs, surveys, scans and discusses. This is an attempt to avoid the confined and nested world of understanding the past as a series of relationships between different times, or by understanding the links between practice and materialities – the meaning behind objects – that most concrete of things. While work has been done to unhinge what archaeology is, the question of what archaeology does, and how it constructs its versions of the past, are rarely examined. In fact some might say that this is something that archaeologists – perhaps other disciplines too – deliberately avoid because to do so challenges a disciplines’ foundation. However, foundational and problematic dichotomies which lie at the heart of modernity have also helped to define archaeology in the 19th century, and they are still evident today. These are polarities like nature:culture, process:material, subjective:objective, or in terms of what is thought of as real:virtual. What these polarities reinforce in archaeology - and possibly other disciplines - are certain types of realities that remain largely unchallenged.

In this paper we offer an alternative to this way of doing archaeology and of gauging history, finding an opportunity to disrupt archaeology’s comfortable foundational reality; to undermine its foundational dichotomies. What we propose is to follow the transformative chains along which archaeology flows in an attempt to map out the multiplicities of a discipline; where there is no one, single reality, or even multiple realities, but flowing multiplicities of being and becoming that emerge through the casual and affective actions in the doing of archaeology. In this sense all discipline realities have an archaeological tendency, awaiting an ‘excavation’ of sorts. What we offer is an examination of the flatter, non-linear and dis-ruptive archaeologies of Dumbarton Rock.
Salvatore ITALIA  
(University of Cagliari)  
‘The Concept of Environment between Creating and Finding’

Is reality to be conceived as a ‘Ready Made World’ (Putnam 1982) or as a world constructed by human individual and social activity? The concept of environment seems to be the boundary concept that in the clearest way shows how we can keep together our apparently contradictory intuitions—that is, those about the external and autonomous character of reality and those about its undeniably constructed character. In a few words, environment seems to be the concept that shows in the clearest way how to keep together a non-epistemic and epistemic notion of reality.

Martina KARELS  
(University of Edinburgh)  
‘New York’s 9/11 Memorial and the Shaping of Memory’

The violent terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 have had a traumatic impact on many, and memorials commemorating the event have been erected across the United States. Most prominent and publicly contested is the National 9/11 Memorial and Museum in New York City built atop and underneath Ground Zero. Since its opening the site has become one of New York’s most popular tourist attractions, its location visibly marked by America’s tallest building: 1 World Trade Centre. The memorial structure and surrounding plaza serves as official representation of the national trauma experienced 13 years ago, staged to express state mourning as well as symbolising collective resilience.

Collective memories are socially constructed. Although they are recollected individually, they are expressed and re-enacted within established social frameworks and conventions. Public remembrances are defined by fluidity and mutability because ‘social frameworks and historical circumstances change over time’, as do contemporary conceptions of reality. The public remembrance of the national trauma of 11 September provides an insightful case as it illustrates how official versions of the past are continuously politicised, appropriated, crafted and re-crafted to adjust to changing social realities. Despite the publicness and hegemony of these official versions, alternative and individual remembrances have agency to operate within their own realities.

Inspired by Connerton’s notion of embodied memory I investigate the performed interactions and embodied practices at the 9/11-Memorial site. Drawing on ethnographic data, interviews and a visual analysis of the space conducted over nine months in 2013-14 in New York City, I will discuss how the narrative of trauma is represented and how public remembrance is enacted and staged by both the memorial institution and day-to-day visitors. Evidenced by the gazes of visitors to the site, the photographs they take, as well as the practices of leaving and capturing memorialising objects, I argue that the traumatic events of the day are actively and passively re-enacted in daily public performances, so contributing to the shaping of the larger memory discourse of 9/11 and its perceived realities.

Laura GOW  
(University of Antwerp)  
‘Perception: Experienced Reality is Always Created’

The idea that our account of perceptual experience should be compatible with a physicalist metaphysics is one that is endorsed by the majority of philosophers working in the philosophy of mind. The real challenge when developing a physicalist account of perceptual experience arises in the attempt to account for illusory and hallucinatory experiences. Representationalists claims to be in the best position to meet this challenge. I will argue that the only version of representationalism which is, in fact, capable of providing a genuinely physicalist account of perceptual experience is a hybrid account. I will call this hybrid account ‘intentional adverbialism’. This view has the benefits of both representationalism and adverbialism but none of the drawbacks. An interesting consequence of this view is that our relationship with mind-independent reality is solely causal. Our experienced reality is entirely created.

In the first part of the paper I argue that none of the existing accounts of perceptual experience are compatible with a genuinely physicalist metaphysics, since they all posit relations to non-physical entities to accommodate hallucinatory or illusory experiences. I will outline my own account – intentional adverbialism – which I claim is the only account which is able to meet this demand.

In the second part of the paper I respond to the three main objections that have been made against adverbialism and explain how my intentionalist version manages to avoid them. First, adverbialism is held to be incompatible with the idea that perceptual experiences are intentional states. (Tye 2014) Second, it is said that adverbialism cannot account
for the fact that our perceptual experience seems (at least) to be constituted by a relation to mind-independent reality. (Crane 2006) Third, Jackson’s ‘many-property’ problem is considered by many to have successfully refuted adverbialism. (Jackson 1977)

In responding to the first objection, I make use of Uriah Kriegel’s recent defence of adverbialism about intentionality. (Kriegel 2008) Kriegel argues that we must endorse adverbialism about intentional states like thoughts and beliefs in order to circumvent the problem of non-existence – the problem which arises due to the fact that we can have beliefs and thoughts about objects that do not exist. If it makes sense to endorse adverbialism about intentional states in general, then the problem of reconciling adverbialism about perceptual experience with the fact that perceptual experiences are intentional states disappears.

In response to the second objection, I argue that we should make a distinction between metaphysical relationality and phenomenological relationality. The first term can be used to describe mental states which are genuinely, constitutively relational, and the second term can be used to describe mental states that seem to be constitutively relational. Once we understand that a metaphysically non-relational neural process/state can instantiate or realise a phenomenologically relational experience, there is no obstacle to explaining the apparent relationality of all perceptual experience within an adverbialist framework.

Adverbialism was introduced by means of a discussion about how we talk about our experiences. (Chisholm 1957) I claim that this was a mistake. Adverbialism as a metaphysical thesis about the structure of our perceptual experiences is entirely independent of the terminology for which the view is best known. I argue that Jackson’s objection presents a challenge to adverbialism only on the assumption that the adverbialist’s terminology is essential to the view. According to my own version of adverbialism, we should regard the terminology merely as an illustration of the metaphysical structure of perceptual experience. Since the adverbialist’s terminology is unnecessary on intentional adverbialism, Jackson’s worry poses no threat to my view.

Intentional adverbialism is the only genuinely physicalist account of perceptual experience, and yet it has an interesting and somewhat counter-intuitive consequence. Although our experiences are the result of the causal interactions that take place between mind-independent reality and our sensory receptors, the perceptual experiences themselves are not relations to mind-independent reality. The reality we experience is entirely created. It is, however, extremely useful since it allows us successfully to navigate our mind-independent environment. This is significant; it means that the concept of created reality is not a modern idea, nor is it the result of advances in technology. Indeed, the fact that our experienced reality is created has been a fundamental feature of all sentient life right from the beginning.

Camille BUTTINGSRUD  
(University of Copenhagen)  
‘The Vastness of the Embodied Self: a Phenomenological Investigation of Dancers’ Self-Consciousness’

During the performing dancer’s interaction with her world and the other - her fellow dancers, the musicians, and their audience - she often finds herself in a bodily state of self-consciousness that extends the current understanding of embodied consciousness and exceeds its traditional terminology. Performing choreography professionally implies both reflective and pre-reflective self-consciousness, and philosophers of dance (Sheets-Johnstone 1980, 2009, 2011, 2012; Parvianen 1998; LeGrand 2007, 2013; LeGrand & Ravn 2009; Montero 2013; Foultier & Roos 2013) have unearthed vast variations of embodied self-consciousness. Yet, when it comes to what these philosophers refer to as thinking in movement, and a form of reflective consciousness at a bodily level, as well as to dancers’ reported experiences of being in a trance and yet hyper-aware, we seem to face terminologically unrecognized states of embodied self-consciousness: states with the common peculiarity of covering reflective awareness and embodied absorption experienced simultaneously.

After empirical research on dancers’ experiences and studies of dance philosophy, aligning this material with Husserl, Zahavi and other phenomenologists’ descriptions of reflection and embodied self-consciousness, I find it plausible to acknowledge the existence of embodied reflective self-consciousness; a reflective process experienced through and with the embodied and/or emotional self. This self-consciousness seems to have its own distinct structure irreducible to reflectivity and pre-reflectivity. My paper aspires to capture the nature of this transcendence of the bodily aspect of the self.

The interviewed dancers describe their bodily self-consciousness on stage with terminology phenomenology traditionally uses on the order of reflection: they are (bodily) attentive, intensely self-aware, explicitly aware of the other and the world, they are disclosing experiences through transformation (by means of the body), they are (emotionally and/or bodily) articulating what they experience pre-reflectively, and thematically transforming or reproducing something received or grasped from their second-nature as dancers, or from other pre-reflective experiences. This could indicate a reflective state of self-consciousness, yet, there is a simultaneous lack of thinking and rational control, reports of
having artistic black-outs, feeling something taking over, someone else leading their arms and legs, of being in a trance. There seems to be an experientially lived as well as theoretically seen experience of the self in which the subject’s bodily aspect of self “thinks”/reflects/accesses herself as object through/in/by means of her embodied activity, in which she is completely immersed.

Embodied reflection is neither mystical nor exclusively experienced by artists or experts. I believe we all have the capacity to reflect emotionally and bodily – playing as children, engaging in sports activities, during erotic convergence, and in yoga and meditation, just to mention some situations. It is the universal human experience of being profoundly focused through the non-conceptual aspect of the self.

In academically recognizing this human capacity of bodily and emotional “high-order” states, we might come closer to a holistic understanding of our nature and constitutive resources. Leaving the mind-body hierarchy behind might enable us to create new ways of dealing with education, jurisdiction, health care, and social issues.

Alicia FUENTES-CALLE
(University of Barcelona)

‘Creation of Reality Approached From the Perspective of the “Art of Language”/Poetics in the Framework of Linguistic Diversity’

My presentation will take the form of two footnotes linked to these words by Edward Sapir (anthropologist, linguist, and poet) from his classic work *Language* (1921):

“Language is the most massive and inclusive art we know, a mountainous and anonymous work of unconscious generations. (...) certain artists (...) are unconsciously striving for a generalized art language, a literary algebra, that is related to the sum of all known languages (...) Their art expression is frequently strained, it sounds at times like a translation from an unknown original (1)—which, indeed, is precisely what it is. These artists—(...)—impress us rather by the greatness of their spirit than the felicity of their art. Their relative failure is of the greatest diagnostic value as an index of the pervasive presence in literature of a larger, more intuitive linguistic medium than any particular language (2)”

(2) Creation of reality approached from the perspective of “art of language”/poetics in the framework of linguistic diversity. Poetics understood, not in the narrow, literary/poetry sense, but as a technology that, by means of ordinary language and its ordinary resources, enhances perception/cognition of reality (either a postulated new reality or a transformed one). This can be achieved via different ways of approaching reference, among them: a) via alternative linguistic construals/patterns or b) via the lexicalization/grammaticalisation (i.e. the bringing to linguistic existence) of previously wordless concepts (one of the most obvious tools to assist in “creating reality”). (A bit of detail here concerning [a]): According to Édouard Glissant (1997) « (...) le multilinguisme n’est pas quantitatif. C’est un des modes de l’imaginaire, « le multilinguisme ne suppose pas la coexistence des langues ni la connaissance de plusieurs langues mais la présence des langues du monde dans la pratique de la sienne ». Linguistic diversity offers a vast field for the experience of alternative construals of reality: a shift from language to language is potentially a shift in point of view (essentialist views avoided). The knowledge we draw from linguistic variation keeps giving us insight into different ways of conceiving of/creating alternative ways to construe reality (reference). For instance, as we find in L.Talmy’s 2000), languages fall into two main categories on the basis of the most characteristic linguistic category they use to refer to physical objects and substances: languages that favour nouns, object-dominant languages (a majority), and languages that favour verbs to refer to physical entities (some Amerindian languages, for instance). This implies that physical entities can be construed as tangible and material objects (the construal to which English – and most languages– speakers are used to), or they can also be possibly codified as an action/process. In *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* Borges offers an illustration of a world created according to an ontology related to such linguistic conditions (these are presented as fantasy, although descriptions of Native American languages similar to the ones described by Borges could probably have been available by the author’s time).

Activation of both a) and b) can surely put on the track towards the “larger language” (which is longed for not just by “some artists” and for literary purposes, as Sapir put it). It is a latent technology for the conception of realities (which, emerging beyond the borders of the comfort zone of our individual languages -originally designed to tackle with small-scale worlds- might sound “at times like a translation from an unknown original” (1)).
I propose to call coexcellence (or co-excellence) a way of achieving excellence through joint action and group cohesiveness. The way our modernity views excellence is too often individualistic, competitive, antagonistic. By studying the conceptual history of esprit de corps as a PhD project at the University of Edinburgh I became interested in the study of a more collaborative, cooperative, one-for-all view of excellence. The idea and practice of coexcellence (or joint excellence, or harmonious excellence) has been part of human history for a long time under other names; I believe it describes more accurately how our social reality is created. This is not to say that in every field there are no heroic leaders or individual inventors, but their relation to the group is dialectical: on one hand the group creates the hero incrementally, as a result of step by step advances, and on the other hand the real leader is always a kind of music conductor, with a good ear for harmony and an instinct for tuned collective agency, or rather music itself as an ideal of indivisibility. Recently, phenomena of group mind, joint action, extended body, collective intentionality, etc. have started to be explored by researchers who are not satisfied with methodological individualism. The history of the concept of esprit de corps will guide me in sketching the outlines of coexcellence, as will the case study of the Bourbaki Group, a French collective of mathematicians.

Nicholas G.S. SAUL
(Sciences Po Paris)

The aim of this paper will be to clarify what exactly could a wittgenstinian perspective on political theory and democracy create as novelty. Through the contextual analysis that is held at the core of Wittgenstein’s philosophy we will attempt to demonstrate that Collective Intention, as understood through this new perspective, can have serious consequences on our political comprehension of democratic constitution and procedure.

We hope to show that such an elaboration of a new democratic paradigm by the wittgenstinian perspective can allow us to discern the normative impact that such ‘collective intention’ may have on the creation of reality in the sociopolitical realm.

For this we must define in what way the ‘grammar of reality’ inscribes itself into the public context. Our hypothesis will begin on the following assertion: All meaning is inscribed in public context (Spadola, J. La pensée contextuelle, Thèse, 2010, p.9). If language games and forms of life are to be understood as the local and global practices of our accord, the public context must consequently be understood as the grounds on which such an accord takes place by implicit and explicit expressions of collective intention.

Once this claim is proven to be a necessary condition to any democratic praxis we shall argue that such a praxis can exist only through an open normative constitution and process by which the iterative capacity of language games and their accord into forms of life creates the normative capacity for a collective intention to be asserted by a concrete community. It is through this perspective of a democratic praxis defined by collective intention that we wish to demonstrate how the rules of grammar that exist in the local and global practices of the public context express the true potential for the creation of reality in politics, what we have named, the grammar of reality.

We will defend this position on the basis of three wittgenstinian concepts: rule-following, context and engagement all three of which are found in the local and global practices that define any concrete community (the definition of which underlies the very notion of an accord). To elaborate on these three concepts as core to the development of a democratic praxis sustaining the capacity for critical reflexion we have tried to summon a different approach to the reading of Wittgenstein, one that refuses to identify a particular philosophy within Wittgenstein’s texts, but instead, that finds in it, a new sensibility, and a new perspective allowing for a novel conscious and critical approach to the problems of philosophy. This approach, we are warranted to name the grammar of reality in the sense used by the philosopher Claude Imbert to describe the freedom found in the new treatment of language and practice expressed in the second philosophical manner of Wittgenstein and its ethical consequences.

To defend this point of view we shall however have to face the opposition of Popper’s meta-language argument based on the reinstitution of the theory of correspondence by Tarski. Our aim will be to show that the realistic point of view defended by such philosophers as Popper but also points of views such as paradoxo-criticism developed in Paul Livingston’s work The politics of logic that hold the formal structure as necessary for the development of the
“radical possibility of resistance to hegemonic and sovereign figures of unity, normalcy, progress and effectiveness” (Livingston, P. 2012, p.183) stray upon the wrong path when defending logic and formalist conceptions as the organon of critique (Popper, K. Une conception réaliste, in La connaissance objective, 1991, p.466). Our response to the realistic and paradoxico-critical points of view will be to find a defence of an organic unity that refuses the meta-linguistic regression through the contextual philosophy standpoint. This position will aim at showing that by the critical consciousness formed in our analysis of the rules of grammar that define our practices in the public context we are capable of creating a political structure that can allow for a real democratic praxis. Such a praxis defines the normative openness of a community and thus its capacity to create reality.

Perig PITROU
(Collège de France, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)
‘Cosmopolitics and Creation of Reality’

The notion of “cosmopolitics” has become pervasive in anthropological studies on Amerindian socio-cosmologies, in order to describe the participation of non-human agents to human society – although this process can be accurately defined by the notion of “collective” (collectif), used by authors such as Latour or Descola. According to the signification that Latour or Stengers are giving to cosmopolitics, what is at stake is the uncertainty concerning powers and agencies of non-human entities, according to the diverse associations in which they are enlisted. From this standpoint, together with scientific discoveries and technological innovations, ritual activity participates to the creation of reality via its capacity to attribute new roles and new functions to non-human agents, adding new dimensions within human’s systems of relations. Drawing on ethnographic data from Mesoamerica, I would like to tackle an ontological issue. What is the status of the virtual reality of beings before their participation to a reality constructed by humans? What are the best metaphors to describe the ambivalence of existents that are both present and absent: figure/ground, city/countryside, connection/disconnection – Latour is also using the word « plasma » about this “interstitial reality” (réalité interstitielle)? Is there a correspondence between these “modalities of inexistence” and the diversity of ritual devices used by humans to integrate these agents into their interactions? By answering these questions, it will be interesting to discuss what criteria can be used to distinguish creation and construction.

David DUPUIS
(EHESS, Collège de France)
‘The Supernatural Factory:
Elaboration of Supernatural Beings in Ayahuasca Practices’

Our presentation is based on ethnographic data collected during an 18 months fieldwork in Takiwasi, a therapeutic community created in 1992 by a french physician and located in the Upper Peruvian Amazon. Each year, few hundred of urban middle-class people from Europe or USA, inspired by the New Age culture and interested in alternative therapies come in Takiwasi to participate to “seminars” including the ritual use of purgative plants, the psychotropic brew ayahuasca and retreats in the jungle. The participation to these activities seems to be able to deeply change the reality of the participant, showing a modifications of his beliefs and representations. Under the influence of the plants ingested, the local speech and the highly codified ritual actions, the later develops a new relationship to the world, to others and to oneself, which result in the deployment of a new network of relationship with supernatural beings including nature’s spirits, ancestors, demons and others Christian entities. Few of them experiment some original evil possession behaviour during the ayahuasca rituals, and most participants designate themselves “infestated”, which means affected and in a certain sense inhabited by unseen evil forces from wich they try to be cleansed. Consequently, the Takiwasi process seems able to make “real” (i.e concrete and manifest) supernatural entities for an audience of Euro-American doubters in a pluralistic context typical of the neoshamanic practices.

Analysing the mutual influence between contextual and cognitive dimensions, exploring the tight links between cognition, lived experience (i.e. perceptions, emotions, feelings, etc.) and cultural surroundings, our presentation will try to give full account of this process able to deeply transform the reality of the participants by the creation of new entities, perceived as concrete and “real”.

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Toward an Ontology of Literary Creation

Martin FORTIER
(ENS-Paris, EHESS, Institut Jean Nicod)

‘How Real Does the World Feel to You?:
Ontological Commitments, From Psychiatric Conditions to Psychotropic Experiences’

In our daily existence, a considerable amount of things remain implicit, unnoticed and taken for granted. For example, when I navigate in my environment, there is no question for me pondering on whether the floor could dissolve under my feet. In my everyday life, I cope with the environment without thinking the least of the floor’s being there. This, however, dramatically changes when an earthquake hits my surroundings; I then come to realise what it means to have (or to not to have) a floor standing under my feet. By the same token, I will argue, we usually do not pay much attention to the sense of reality our world is imbued with. Nonetheless, in exceptional cases – prompted by some psychiatric disorder, by a long mental training or by the intake of some psychotropic chemical – we come to realise what it means for the world to feel “real” or “unreal” or “hyper-real”.

The study of the sense of reality has been pioneered by such authors as Heidegger, Schütz and Jaspers. The latter, in particular, has thoroughly explored the arcana of psychosis and showed how its characteristic atmosphere of (un)reality gradually transforms itself. More recently, drawing upon Heidegger and Jaspers, Matthew Ratcliffe has dedicated much effort to renew the study of the sense of reality as found in such conditions as psychosis, derealisation syndrome and severe depression. Research in neuropyschiatry and in neurocomputational sciences has also contributed in its own right to the understanding of the sense of reality. For example, Bayesian models of psychosis explaining the mechanisms which lead from the uncanny atmosphere of early psychosis to the delusional atmosphere of advanced psychosis interestingly echo in scientific terms Jaspers’ phenomenological insights (e.g., Paul Fletcher, Philip Corlett). Similarly, the study of the neurobiology (e.g., Franz Vollenweider, Robin Carhart-Harris) and the psychopharmacology (e.g., David Nichols, Marcello Spinella) of several psychotropic-induced experiences clearly establishes that the sense of reality can be chemically altered in various ways.

In this talk, I would like to review both phenomenological and scientific evidence regarding the sense of reality. Building on such diverse examples as psychiatric conditions (psychosis, derealisation syndrome, Cotard syndrome, etc.), cognitive and artefactual techniques (Buddhist meditative techniques and virtual reality devices) and psychotropic experiences (induced by psilocybin, LSD, ayahuasca, Salvia divinorum, Datura stramonium, etc.), I will endeavour to chart a map documenting the different shapes the sense of reality can take (ranging from the sense of unreality to the sense of hyper-reality).

I will finally discuss the significance of these findings for anthropology and cross-cultural psychology. So far, anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists have been focusing on the question of knowing how different human groups attribute properties to things (e.g., do they distribute psychological, biological or physical properties to the same objects in the same fashion?). It is worth noting that both cognitive anthropologists/psychologists (e.g., Pascal Boyer, Scott Atran, Douglas Medin) and “ontological” anthropologists (e.g., Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Martin Holbraad, Philippe Descola) define ontologies as property-attribution ontologies as opposed to existence-attribution ontologies. I will not be claiming that anthropologists and cognitive scientists should discard the question of knowing how humans variably attribute properties to things (when such work is neatly and rigorously carried out, in the fashion of Atran and Medin’s, it proves extremely fruitful and valuable); but I will be arguing that anthropologists and cognitive scientists should not forget to pay attention to another strand of investigation concerning not how properties are attributed to things but how existence can be variably attributed to things – that is, how things can variably feel more or less real. This is all the more important as the variability of the sense of reality is not simply limited to mental disorders but virtually extends to every “polyphasic culture” in which a wealth of techniques aiming to alter the way the world is felt can be found (cf. Charles Laughlin).

Zornita DIMITROVA
(WWU Münster)

‘The Scaffold of a World – Toward an Ontology of Literary Creation’

Are literary worlds a simulation, an expression or an extension of what we call ‘reality’? To what extent is it possible to speak of a ‘creation’ and how does a reality create itself? In looking into these questions, this paper proposes an ‘expressionist’ take on the matter of literary worlds’ creation. It outlines an ontology of unlimited groundless becoming inspired by Deleuze’s Expressionism in Philosophy. Unlike Romanticist notions of ‘expression’ as ‘the internal
made external’, Deleuze’s ‘expressionism’ is a concept that allows us a glimpse into the possibility of nondual creation. This nondual way of scaffolding a world becomes especially visible in examples of postdramatic theatre whereby the process of literary worlds’ creation does not follow a habitual logic. Rather, these examples show us literary worlds constructed almost entirely out of ruptures and breakage points within representation. In this way, postdramatic theatre reinforces the view that what we perceive as representation is the secondary capture of a fluxional field of forces and relations that uncovers a completely different vantage point and way of reality creation. This type of creation, the present paper shows, plays itself out on a cosmological scale as the collision of two conceptual clusters, expression and sense. Both concepts are supra-representational and thus ‘extra-worldly’ components which, however, are additive to ‘the genesis of representation’ (Hughes 2008). In its most abstract guise, expression is a flux of non-purposive becoming that, while non-motivated, motions toward a surface of ‘sense’. The latter, speaking with Deleuze, is a supra-representational, yet indispensable constituent within representation that serves as representation’s distinguishing condition. Once expression congeals into sense, however, a literary world with its adjacent ontological affiliations comes to the fore. The present paper traces the ontology of expression (understood as a world-generating component in continual motion) and the emergence of an event of sense (understood as the mark that a world has taken shape) out of this constitutive motion. Expression’s generative motion toward sense takes place before the order of representation sketches itself out and thus functions as the latter’s ontological antecedent. This vantage point uncovers dimensions in postdramatic theatre that are non-teleological, constellatory rather than depending on linear causality, not necessarily based on action, not necessarily presupposing subjectivity, extra-temporal, and indifferent to spatiality. Herein the composition of literary worlds becomes a genesis aided by the world-making capacity of ‘expression’ and striving to generate a surplus of ‘sense’. A literary world thus takes shape on the fault lines between two orders, doubly stretched toward both representation and pre-conceptual regions of ontological constitution.

Tim INGOLD
(University of Aberdeen)
‘One World Anthropology’

As philosophical fashions lurch from one extreme to the other – from the hyper-relativism of the cultural construction industry to the ever-multiplying essentialisms of the ‘ontological turn’ – it is worth re-emphasising a core principle of anthropology which we neglect at our peril. It is that we human beings, along with other inhabitants of the planet, are creatures not of many worlds all but closed to one another, but of one world that is fundamentally open. Every life, then, is both an exploration into the possibilities of being that this world affords and a contribution towards its ongoing formation. Here I spell out three critical implications of this principle. First, the capacities and dispositions of human beings, whatever they may be, are formed within histories of pre- and post-natal ontogenetic development, under environmental conditions that have themselves been shaped by previous human and non-human activity. Our primary concern, therefore, must be not with ontologies but ontogenies, with generations rather than philosophies of being. Secondly, practices of learning and teaching, long and unjustly marginalised in an anthropology that remains obsessed with the shapes and forms of mature thought, should be restored to the centrality they deserve. And thirdly, the oneness of the world is founded not on similarity but difference – on difference, nevertheless, that arises from within the universe of relations that make it up.

Alan BUNNY
(University of Edinburgh)
‘Could a Computer Create Its Own Representations?’

Artificial Intelligence systems need to maintain a representation of their environment so that they can interpret sensory information and plan actions. This is true for robots, chess playing programs, question-answering systems, softbots on the web, in fact, any computer-based agent. Most such representations are initially hand crafted by the system’s developer then incrementally adapted by the addition and deletion of facts, as sensors detect environmental changes or actions make such changes. This arrangement was sufficient when agents were built only for a narrowly defined task in a fairly stable environment, but it is no longer sufficient for many applications.

• In a rapidly changing environment, it will not be sufficient to add and delete a few facts in a representation. Not only must rules also evolve, but change to the representation’s language may be needed. In a multi-
agent environment, agents must represent each other. Not only might agents change, but so might the agent population.

- Problem solving success is very dependent on problem representation. If an agent’s tasks change then its old representation may no longer suit its new tasks, so it must evolve to suit the new problems.

For example, suppose you have a softbot agent on the web that makes plans for you using the services offered by other agents. It might plan a holiday by combining taxi, plane, accommodation, and sightseeing services. The population of service-providing agents is huge and rapidly changing. The kind of tasks you set your agent may change. Your agent must be able to evolve its representation to match this changing environment.

My research group has been developing algorithms to enable agents to change their representations. We are especially interested in conceptual changes driven by reasoning failures. For instance, reasoning may fail because it infers something false, fails to conclude something true or is just very slow at concluding anything. Diagnosis of such failures can suggest repairs to the agent’s faulty representation. The change required might just be to add or delete a fact, but it might instead be to provide a missing precondition to a rule or to change the language of the representation.

In our softbot world, reasoning failures take the form of plans that fail on execution. The planning agent may then need to delete the ‘fact’ that another agent offers a service, or it may need to add a new precondition that another agent requires to be paid in advance. More fundamentally, agents may fail to communicate because they do not share a vocabulary. Their vocabularies must then be aligned.

We have developed algorithms for automating representational change in the following domains: web-based, service-providing agents; discrepancies between physics theories and experimental evidence; and mathematical proofs. Recently, we have generalised from these domain-specific algorithms to develop the general-purpose reformation algorithm.

In all these applications, the following simple language changes were sufficient.

- One concept is split into several, or several concepts are merged into one. Examples from physics are: splitting ‘matter’ into ‘dark matter’ and ‘visible matter’; and merging of ‘morning star’ and ‘evening star’ into ‘Venus’.

- A dependency may need to be added or deleted. For example, the period of a pendulum does depend on its length, but the acceleration of an object in free fall does not depend on its weight.

Such changes may appear minor but, as the history of physics shows, they can accumulate into significant changes. Recently, we have explored algorithms for analogical blending, where two old concepts are merged into a new one. For instance, we can merge ‘house’ and ‘boat’ to form either ‘houseboat’ or ‘boathouse’. ‘Houseboat’ comes from aligning the house with the boat, but ‘boathouse’ comes from aligning the boat with the house’s occupant. Analogical blends can be used to form novel concepts; an inadequate representation may be improved by boosting it with concepts from an analogous representation. An example, again from physics, is Rutherford’s model of the atom as a miniature solar system, in which the nucleus is aligned with the Sun and the electrons with the planets. Often, analogical blends are faulty and need repairing. This was true of Rutherford’s model, which failed to explain why the electrons did not emit radiation, lose energy and fall into the nucleus. The model was repaired with the aid of quantum mechanics. We have recently begun exploring how reformation can be used to repair faulty blends.

Can our automated agents be claimed to create their own representations? All our algorithms only evolve old representations into new ones. There is no de novo creation of representations. But would it be reasonable to expect one? Human new representations also seem to come by analogy with, or repair of, old representations, informed by their failures.